# *The City* Shuſhan *Perplex'd:*

OR,

The Perplexity of the Proteſtant *Diſſenters*, conſider'd.

IN A

# SERMON

Preach'd at

## *SHERBORNE,*

*January*, 16. $17\frac{11}{12}$.

Upon Occaſion

Of the Publick Faſt for a Peace, ſoon after the paſſing of the Act againſt *Occaſional Conformity.*

By *JOHN ENGLAND*,
Miniſter of the Goſpel.

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# Esth. III. 15. latter Part.

*And the King and* Haman *ſat down to drink, but the City* Shuſhan *was perplex'd.*

IT is at preſent, my beloved Chriſtians, a Day of *Perplexity*, and of great *Expectation*. We are all expecting the happy Return of a good *Peace* after a long and expenſive *War*. And we that are *Diſſenters* are full of *Perplexity*, in being excluded the *common Joy*, by having our *Native* Rights and Privileges, confirm'd to us by Act of *Parliament*, at this Juncture *taken* from us, in ſo *ſudden* a manner, as ſcarce left room for the making our *Prayers* to Almighty God, or making a *Petition* to the Queen about it: So that with us 'tis a Day of *Perplexity*, as it was with the *Jews* in my Text; tho' (bleſſed be God) there is a *vaſt difference* between the two Caſes.

That you may ſee the *Occcaſion* and ſcope of the Words, 'twill be *needful* to give you ſome account of the Chapter, wherein we have obſervable theſe following *Particulars*.

1. Here is *the Advancement of* Haman, who is made the King's *Favorite.* Verse 1. *After these things did King* Ahasuerus *promote* Haman, *the Son of* Ammedatha *the* Agagite, *and advanced him, and set his Seat above all the Princes that were with him.*

This *Haman* (as *Josephus* tells us) was a n *Amalekite*, called in this Place by the Name of an *Agagite*, because he was of the Posterity of *Agag*, who was King of the *Amalekites*, and the *Jew's* avowed *Enemy*, as you may see, 1 *Sam.* 15.

Him did the King *advance*, and *set his Seat above all the Princes that were with him.* We have a like Expression concerning *Jehoiakim*, 2 King. 25. 28. *And he spake kindly unto him, and set his Throne above the Thrones of the Kings that were with him in* Babylon. Hence some conjecture, that *Haman* by Birth was a *Prince*, as *Jehoiakim* was, whose Seat was *set above* the rest of the Captains, as *Haman's* here was. But whether *Haman* was by Birth a *Prince* or no, the King, it seems, had a mind to prefer him; what he saw in *Haman* to recommend him to his *Favour*, is somewhat difficult to conceive: For 'tis plain by the Story, he was not a Man of *Honour* or *Justice*, but proud, passionate, revengeful and malicious; yet he is *advanced*, the King makes him his *Favourite*, his *Confident* and prime *Minister of State*, and commands all his Servants to do him *Reverence.*

2. Here is *Mordecai's Refusal to bow to him*, Ver. 2. *And all the King's Servants that were in the King's Gate bowed, and reverenced* Haman; *for the King had so commanded concerning him: but* Mordecai *bowed not, nor did him reverence.* Which is amplified in the following Verses, by the King's Servants

vants *preſſing* him to it, and repreſenting to him the *Danger* of neglecting it, ſeeing it was the *King*'s Commandment, and conſidering *Haman*'s proud Temper: But *Mordecai* ſtill adher'd to his Principles, and *refuſed* to bow, giving this Reaſon, becauſe he was a *Jew*, Verſe 3. 4.

*Mordecai*, no doubt, paſt under much *Cenſure* for this his *Refuſal*. Some, perhaps, aſcrib'd it to want of *Breeding*; others to a *Factious* and *Seditious* Spirit, and *Diſaffection* to the King and Government; others to *Pride* and *Envy*, becauſe on the Score of his Alliance to *Heſter*, he himſelf was not ſo much *promoted*. Thus *good Men* ſometimes paſs under hard and *wrong Cenſures*. Whereas *Mordecai*'s Refuſal is generally *eſteem'd* among Divines to be *conſcientious* and *pious*, there being ſomething in that *Reverence* that was to be paid to *Haman*, which *Mordecai* could not with a *ſafe Conſcience* comply with: And accordingly *Mordecai*, in the *Apochryphal* Chapters of this Book, is brought in thus, *appealing* to God in this Matter, Chap. 13. 12, 13, 14. *Thou knoweſt, Lord, that it was neither in Contempt nor Pride, nor for any Deſire of Glory, that I did not bow down to proud* Haman; *for I could have been content with Good-will, for the Salvation of* Iſrael, *to kiſs the Soles of his Feet: But I did this, that I might not prefer the Glory of Man above the Glory of God, neither will I worſhip any but thee.* From whence we may conclude, that the *Honour* required to be given to *Haman*, ſavoured ſomewhat of *Divine* Worſhip, and was ſo *extravagant*, as was not fit for any mortal Man to *give* or *receive*; and for this reaſon he refuſed to *bow* to him. And perhaps alſo he refuſed to do it, becauſe he was an *Amalekite*,

one

one of that *devoted* Nation, with whom God had ſworn he would have *perpetual* War, *Exod.* 17. 16. and concerning which he had given that ſolemn Charge, *Deut.* 25. 17. *Remember what* Amalek *did.* Tho' *Religion* does by no means deſtroy *good Manners*, but teacheth us to render *Honour* to whom Honour is due; yet 'tis the *Character* of a Citizen of *Sion* to *deſpiſe* a vile Perſon, *Pſal.* 15. 4. *In whoſe Eyes a vile Perſon is contemned.* But whatever was the *reaſon*, this is plain, that *Mordecai* refuſed to do him Reverence.

3. Here's *Haman's proud Reſentment of it*, who thought it ſcorn to lay hold on *Mordecai* alone, and therefore reſolv'd to be reveng'd on *him* and all the *Nation* of the *Jews* for his ſake; Verſe 5, 6. *And when* Haman *ſaw that* Mordecai *bowed not, nor did him Reverence, then was* Haman *full of Wrath; and he thought ſcorn to lay Hands on* Mordecai *alone, for they had ſhew'd him the People of* Mordecai: *Wherefore* Haman *ſought to deſtroy all the* Jews *that were throughout the whole Kingdom of* Ahaſuerus, *even the People of* Mordecai. Which is amplified in the following Verſes.

1. *By caſting Lots to find out a good Day for that purpoſe.* Verſe 7. *In the firſt Month (that is the Month* Niſan) *in the Twelfth Year of King* Ahaſuerus, *they caſt Pur, that is the Lot, before* Haman, *from Day to Day, and from Month to Month, to the Twelfth Month, that is, the Month* Adar. This caſting of Lots prov'd *favourable* to the *Jews*, for the Lot fell on the *laſt Month* of the Year, which gave the *Jews* time to provide for their Safety.

As for the *Manner* of their caſting of Lots, probably 'twas this. They wrote the *Names* of the Twelve Months of the Year in ſeveral *Papers*, and

and putting them together into a *Veſſel*, they ſtirred them about, and then one *blindfolded* pull'd out one, having firſt *prayed* unto their God, that the Month which *firſt came out*, might be the Month for this *Execution*; and as it fell out, the Month *Adar*, the laſt Month in the Year was *drawn firſt*; and the ſame being done *from Month to Month*, and that Month ſtill coming out *firſt*, at laſt by the like means they found out *what Day* of the Month it ſhould be done, namely the 13th Day thereof. *The Lot* (ſaith *Solomon*) *is caſt into the Lap; but the whole diſpoſing thereof is of the Lord*, Prov. 16. 33. Thus God diſpoſed of *Haman*'s Lot in the *Jew*'s Favour, by putting off their intended Deſtruction for the ſpace of a *Year*, which gave them time to look about them, in order to the defeating of *Haman*'s Deſigns: Probably *Haman* thought the Enterprize *hazardous*, that he was going upon, and for this reaſon he would not *venture* on it, but under the Smiles of a *good Omen*, and therefore he appeals to the *Lot*, and proceeds with great *Caution*. But God can blaſt the moſt *cautious* Methods, and make them to *ſerve* his own Purpoſes. *Haman* having *appeal'd* to the Lot, to the Lot he *ſhall go*, which by adjourning the *Execution*, prov'd a Means of his own *Deſtruction*, and the *Jew*'s *Preſervation*.

2. 'Tis amplified *by his Requeſt to the King, that the* Jews *might be deſtroyed*; Verſe 8. 9. *And* Haman *ſaid to King* Ahaſuerus, *there is a certain People ſcattered abroad, and diſperſed among the People, in all the Provinces of thy Kingdom, and their Laws are diverſe from all People, neither keep they the King's Laws, therefore it is not for the King's Profit to ſuffer them: If it pleaſe the King, let it be written, that*

 *they*

*they may deſtroyed, and I will pay ten Thouſand Talents of Silver to the Hands of thoſe that have the Charge of the Buſineſs, to bring it into the King's Treaſuries.*

*Haman* having by Lot found out, as he thought, a *good Day*, immediately he moved the King to *deſtroy* them: And that he might the better *prevail* with the King, he paints them forth in *odious Colours*, and makes a *falſe* and *malicious* Repreſentation of them, which has always been the *Method* of God's Peoples Enemies. 'Tis no new thing for the beſt of Men to have *Invidious Characters* fix'd on them. If 'tis no Sin to *kill* them, 'tis no Sin to *belie* them. Thus *Haman* makes a falſe and malicious Repreſentation of them. *There is a certain People*, ſaith he, *&c.* He repreſents them as a People *without Name*, as if no body knew whence they came, and what they were. They are not Incorporated, ſaith he, but *ſcattered abroad and diſperſed in all the Provinces*; he repreſents them as Fugitives and Vagabonds, the Burden and Scandal of the Places where they live: *And their Laws* ſaith he) *are diverſe from all the People*; they do not conform to the Statutes of the Kingdom, and the Cuſtoms of the Country, they are not of the *Eſtabliſhed* Religion, *neither keep they* (ſaith he) *the King's Laws*, particularly that of bowing to *Haman*; whereby he inſinuated that it might be gathered, how *ſtubborn* they would be, if they ſhould be tried in other things.

Thus he gives them a *malicious* and *invidious* Character, and intimates that they might *eaſily be deſtroyed* by the People, in every Place where they liv'd, ſeeing they were *diſperſed* and *ſcattered abroad*

*abroad* in all Parts of the King's Dominions; wherefore he *beſought* him to iſſue forth a *Decree* for their Deſtruction, and that all their *Spoil* might be given to thoſe that ſhould do the *Execution:* And leſt the *Damage* which ſhould hereby come to the King ſhould make him *averſe* from this Motion, ſeeing a great *Tribute* was paid yearly by the *Jews* unto the King; he offer'd to pay into the King's Treaſuries *ten Thouſand* Talents of Silver in lieu thereof. Thus *proud* and *malicious* Men will ſtick at no *Charge* to gratify their Revenge: But *Haman*, no doubt, knew how to *reimburſe himſelf* out of the *Spoil* of the *Jews*, which his *Janizaries* were to ſeize for him, and ſo to make them *bear the Charges* of their own Ruin, whilſt he himſelf hoped to be not only a *Saver*, but a *Gainer* by the Bargain.

3. 'Tis alſo amplified *by the King's granting of his Requeſt*, and giving him a Commiſſion to do with the *Jews* what he would; Verſe 10, 11. *And the King took his Ring from his Hand, and gave it into* Haman, *the Son of* Ammedatha *the* Agagite, *the* Jew's *Enemy. And the King ſaid unto* Haman, *the Silver is given to thee, the People alſo, to do with them, as it ſeemeth good to thee.* The King was no ſooner deſired, but without *examining* the Truth of his Allegations, he granted him *Liberty* to do what he would with them, ſo *Wiſe* and *Faithful* did he eſteem *Haman*; and ſo regardleſs was he of the *Loſs* he ſhould hereby ſuſtain in his *Tribute*, and how much *Haman* would gain by the Spoil, that he gave him withal the ten Thouſand Talents; *the Silver is given to thee, and the People alſo*, &c. And ſuch an *implicit Confidence* he had in him, that he gave him his *Ring*, his Privy-

Seal, or Sign Manuel, wherewith to *confirm* whatever *Edict* he himſelf ſhould draw up for that Purpoſe.

Accordingly *Haman* having received ſuch an ample *Commiſſion*, immediately iſſues forth *Warrants*, requiring all Perſons, on ſuch a Day to be ready to *deſtroy* the *Jews*; and the Poſts went forth, being *haſtened* by the King's Commandment, as we read in the following Verſes; Ver. 12. 13, 14, 15. *Then were the King's Scribes called on the 13th Day of the firſt Month, and there was written according to all that* Haman *had commanded, unto the King's Lieutenants, and to the Governours that were over every Province, and to the Rulers of every People of every Province, according to the Writing thereof, and to every People after their Language; in the Name of King* Ahaſuerus *was it written, and ſealed with the King's Ring. And the Letters were ſent by Poſts into all the King's Provinces, to deſtroy, to kill, and to cauſe to periſh all* Jews, *both young and old, little Children and Women, in one Day, even upon the 13th Day of the twelfth Month (which is the Month* Adar) *and to take the Spoil of them for a Prey. The Copy of the Writing for a Commandment to be given in every Province, was publiſhed unto all People, that they ſhould be ready againſt that Day. The Poſts went out, being haſtened by the King's Commandment, and the Decree was given in* Shuſhan *the Palace.* And then follow the Words of my Text. *And the King and* Haman *ſat down to drink, but the City* Shuſhan *was perplexed.* In which Words, (as Mr. *Henry* has well noted) we have the *different Temper* of the *Court* and *City* upon this Occaſion.

1. The *Court* was very *merry* upon it. *The King and* Haman *ſat down to drink:* Haman was afraid

afraid leſt the King's Conſcience ſhould *ſmite* him for what he had done, and he ſhould begin to wiſh it *undone* again; to prevent which, he engroſſed him to himſelf, and kept him *drinking.* This *curſed* Method many take to *drown* their Convictions, and *harden* their own Hearts, and the Hearts of others in Sin.

2. The *City* was very *ſad* upon it: *But the City* Shuſhan *was perplexed.* The *Jews* there were *perplexed,* and not only the *Jews,* but alſo their *Neighbours,* that had any Principles of Juſtice and Compaſſion. It griev'd them to ſee their *King* ſo abuſed, *Wickedneſs* in the Place of Judgment, and *Iniquity* eſtabliſhed by a Law. It griev'd them to ſee *Men* that lived *peaceably* treated ſo *barbarouſly*; to ſee their *innocent* Neighbours expoſed to the *Rage* of their unreaſonable Adverſaries, and this without *Fault,* or any juſt *Provocation,* unleſs it was of a *particular Perſon*; and why all ſhould ſuffer for *one Man,* they thought very hard; neither was the *Fault* of that ſingle Perſon ſo very *heinous,* when the Matter was *narrowly* look'd into.

And thus I have ſhewn you the *Occaſion* and *Scope* of theſe Words, and what was the reaſon of the *Jew*'s *Perplexity,* and ſo I ſhall *diſmiſs* the Words of my Text, and come to *apply* the Matter to our ſelves.

## *APPLICATION.*

Bleſſed be God, *we* have not ſuch *Cauſe* of Grief and *Perplexity* as the *Jews* had. A *Decree* was paſs'd againſt them, to *deſtroy,* to *kill,* and to cauſe to *periſh* all *Jews,* both young and old, little Children and Women, in one Day. No ſuch thing

thing can be said of *Dissenters:* Nay, let me add, the Act of *Toleration* is still in force, which Her gracious *Majesty* (whom God long preserve) has promised to *preserve Inviolable*; so that we have *Liberty* to wait on God without Disturbance, and to *Worship* him in that Way we think most *agreeable* to the holy Scriptures, having none to *disturb* or make us *afraid.*

What then is the matter, you will say, that the *Dissenters* are *uneasy?* What reason have they to be *perplexed?* To this I shall answer in the following Particulars, wherein I intend no Reflection on the *Government*, but only to let the *Dissenters* see what cause of *Perplexity* they have at present. And,

1. It is Matter of Perplexity to us, *to see the Ice broken.* Her *Majesty* has promised in Her *Speech* to the Parliament, to *preserve the Toleration Inviolable.* And therefore the *Dissenters* are in great *Perplexity* about this *Promise:* For by the Act of *Toleration*, we are secured from *Penalties* for Conscience sake. And therefore we would gladly be resolv'd, how this is *consistent* with another Act, which *excludes* such *Dissenters* as are in Places of *Trust* and *Power*, from this Privilege; nay, and lays a *Fine* on them if they go to a *Dissenting Meeting*, which before this time they had *liberty* to do, and this by vertue of the *Act of Toleration.* And therefore it fills us with some *Perplexity*, as thinking that the Act of *Toleration* is not *Inviolably preserved*, notwithstanding Her Majesty's *Promise.*

Perhaps we may be out, and therefore I say, we would gladly be *resolved* in this Case, for at present we are of this *Perswasion*; neither are we alone

alone in our *Sentiments* (a). Now if it ſhould be ſo, that the *Bill* talk'd of is *inconſiſtent* with Her Majeſty's *Promiſe*, (to preſerve *the Toleration Inviolable*) and *breaks* in directly upon it, in *one material* Branch of it, we would be glad to *know* (the Ice being broken) how we ſhall be *ſecured* in what's behind?

2. 'Tis Matter of Perplexity to us, *to ſee Perſecution come in faſhion.* Since the late *Revolution*, it has been the Doctrine of the Church and Diſſenters, *that none ſhould be puniſhed for Conſcience ſake*, which is ſubject to God only. And therefore in the *Preamble* of an *Occaſional Bill*, that ſome Years paſt was before the Houſe, there were Words to this purpoſe; *Whereas the Church of* England *is againſt Perſecution*, &c. Now we would gladly be reſolved, whether the *turning* Perſons out of Places of *Preferment*, of Truſt and Profit, nay, and laying a *Fine* on them, if they go to a *Diſſenting-Meeting*, be not one Branch of *Perſecution?* I ſay, we would gladly be reſolv'd in this Point; for to us, at preſent, 'tis Matter of *Perplexity.*

We take *Perſecution*, paſſively conſidered, *to be Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake*, or for the ſake of a *good Conſcience.* Now the Queſtion is, Whether many Perſons muſt not part with their *Preferments*, and with their *Sallaries*, which they enjoy under the Government, merely to maintain a

(a) *Saith the Biſhop of* Sarum *in his Speech upon the former* Occaſional Bill, *pag.* 8. I can't agree to any ſuch Clauſe (namely, as a Fine, *&c.*) nor is it conſiſtent with the Act of Toleration, to lay a heavy Fine for going to a Meeting tolerated by Law.

*good Conſcience?* We fear, this will be the Caſe. 'Tis true, it does not yet appear: but the *Event* will diſcover it. Now, if they part with their *Preferments*, ſuch as are *honourable*, and ſuch as are *profitable*; 'tis a plain Caſe, they *ſuffer* the Loſs of theſe Privileges for their *Conſcience* ſake; for what elſe ſhould *oblige* them to it? And ſurely, we have reaſon to judge *charitably* of them, if they do ſo; for no better *Evidence* can be given of a *good Conſcience*, than to part with the *Honours* and *Preferments* of the World for the ſake of it.

And as for *others* that are in Preferments, and have not that *Integrity* they ſhould have, it is to them a *Snare* and *Temptation*, to make them act contrary to the *Dictates* of their Conſcience, mereto *keep* their Places of Truſt, Honour and Profit; ſo that both ways 'tis matter of *Perplexity*.

3. 'Tis Matter of Perplexity to us, *to ſee a Foundation laid for Marks of Diſtinction to be made between us.* I am bold to aſſert, That the *Diſſenters* are as hearty Friends to the *preſent Government*, and as oppoſite to the *Pretender*'s Intereſt, as any Perſons in the Nation. And why ſuch *Diſtinctions* ſhould be made between *them*, and *other* Her Majeſty's faithful Subjects, as that one ſhall be *advanced*, to Places of Civil Truſt and Power, and the other *not*; yea, that the other, by a *new Law*, not heard of before, ſhould be made *uncaple* of them; ſo uncapable, as that for the future it ſhall not be in Her *Majeſty's* Power to prefer them if She pleaſe, what great need ſoever Her *Majeſty*, or the *Nation* may have of them; this to us is Matter of *Perplexity*.

We are all equally *born* Her Majeſty's Subjects, and have a *natural* Right to the Privileges of

 ſuch.

ſuch. And therefore to be *branded* with publick Marks of *Infamy* and *Diſgrace*, as tho' none among us were fit to be *intruſted* with a Civil Poſt, and for ever to be *excluded* from all the *Emoluments* and *Advantages* of the Government; and this, without *Fault*, or any juſt *Provocation*, as tho' the Queen was a *Mother* to ſome, and to others only a *Step-Mother*; this to us is Matter of *Perplexity*.

4. 'Tis Matter of Perplexity to us, *to be deprived of our legal Rights.* Before the Bill againſt *Occaſional-Conformity*, we had a *legal Right* to many Privileges we now want. We had a *legal Capacity* for a *Place of Truſt* under the Government; and being *advanced* to ſuch a Poſt, we had *liberty* by Law to ſerve God ſtatedly in that *Way of Worſhip* we found moſt edifying to our Souls. But now we are *depriv'd* of this Liberty; theſe *legal Rights*, both *Civil* and *Religious* are taken from us, and this without *Forfeiture* on our Side; there is no *Crime* pretended in the Caſe, and therefore it muſt needs be Matter of Grief and *Perplexity* to us, to be thus puniſhed without Fault.

The judicious Author of *The Intereſt of* England, *in reſpect to Proteſtant Diſſenters*, &c. having put this Argument in a good Light, I ſhall take the liberty to tranſcribe his Words. Pleading for Diſſenters againſt the former *Occaſional Bill*, ſaith he, *pag.* 9, 10, 11. " How *unaccountable* will " it be to *puniſh* Men, who hitherto ſtand *unconvicted*, by depriving them of a *legal Capacity* " to receive the Honours and Profits of a *Place* " of Truſt? This is equal to affecting a Man's " *Property* by a Fine, or to the depriving him of " a *legal Capacity* to receive the Emoluments of " a *Legacy* or an *Executorſhip*.

" A Man has a *Right* to enjoy nothing in a " Country, but what he enjoys by *Law*; and " and he has an *equal* Right to every thing that " he ſo *enjoys:* And conſequently every *Depri-* " *vation* of any thing which he enjoys *by Law,* " is equally a *Puniſhment* in Kind, tho' not in " Degree. Now the *Diſſenters,* at preſent, have " a Capacity *by Law,* upon giving the *Sacramen-* " *tal Security,* that they are not *popiſh Recuſants,* " to hold any Place, which any other of their " Peers, or Fellow-Subjects of the ſame Rank " and Station can hold or enjoy: And they " have at preſent as much *Right* to this *Capacity* " as to any Part of their *Property,* or to their Ca- " pacity to take by *Teſtament,* &c. And there- " fore to deprive them of the *Capacity* to hold " a Place, is as much a *Puniſhment* in Kind, as " to deprive them of any of the other, *&c.*

" Thus a Teſt, that *incapacitates* Diſſenters to " hold *Places*; for going to ſeparate Meetings " *puniſhes* them all: But it will puniſh thoſe " much more *ſeverely,* who will be thereby de- " prived of *Offices,* which they actually poſſeſs. " Theſe *Offices* they hold by *Law,* as much as " they hold their *Eſtate,* or any other *Right* " which they enjoy. And as no Man can be " deprived of any *Right,* or any *Property,* but " under the Notion of a *Puniſhment*; ſo can no " Diſſenter be deprived of his *Office* but in the " ſame way.

" And indeed the *Puniſhment* will be none of " the mildeſt. I am ſure it will be more *ſevere* " than the *Fines* of ſome late Reigns: For de- " priving the Diſſenters of the *Emoluments* of " ſome Places, is depriving them of *more Money,*

" to

" to which they have a *Right* at preſent, than " the *Fines* did, which were *levy'd* by Acts made " in the Reign of King *Charles* II.

" And ſince that Author, (*viz.* of *the Caſe of* " *the Toleration recogniz'd*) allows, that *to puniſh* " *Men for worſhipping of God according to their Con-* " *ſciences is Perſecution:* He, and all the World " muſt allow, that the Teſt we have been diſ- " courſing upon, is ſuch in the *ſtrickeſt Senſe.* So far this Author.

5. It is Matter of Perplexity to us, *to ſee the Scripture Rule ſo much forgotten.* The Scripture Rule is, to do to others as we would be dealt with. Matt. 7. 12. *Therefore all Things whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.* Now I appeal to thoſe that have been *urging* our Governours to *exclude* Diſſenters from all Places of Truſt and Profit, even in *Civil Matters*, whether they in *like Circumſtances* would be willing to be ſo treated? I know they would not: Where then is the *Juſtice* of this Proceeding?

Would any of them be willing to be *branded* with Marks of *Diſgrace*, as Perſons unfit to be *truſted* in the Government? Would any of them be willing to be *deprived* of their *Legal*, Civil and Religious *Rights*; and this without *Fault* or any juſt *Provocation?* Would not they eſteem ſuch a Procedure *Injuſtice* and *Hardſhip?* How then do they *deal by others* as they would be dealt with?

Beſides, I might add, that the Scripture Rule is, *Let your Moderation be known to all Men*, Phil. 4. 4. But what is become of *Moderation* now? It is alſo another Scripture Rule *to walk together, wherein we are agreed*, tho' we be not all of one

Mind in every *punctilio*, Phil. 4. 5. But how can this be, if it be made *Criminal* and *Penal?* 'Tis alſo another Scripture Rule, *Him, that is weak in the Faith receive you, but not to doubtful Diſputations*, Rom. 14. 1. But now, it ſeems, they muſt be *rejected.* Now, we all profeſs to take the *Scriptures* for our *Rule.*

6. 'Tis Matter of Perplexity to us, *To ſee an Article of our Creed diſcarded.* In the Apoſtle's Creed we profeſs to believe, *The Communion of Saints*, which not only *imports* a Communion and common Fellowſhip in the *Benefits* of Chriſt's Death, but alſo that Chriſtians ſhould have *Fellowſhip* and *Communion* one with another in the *Ordinances* of the Goſpel, ſuch as publick Prayer, hearing the Word preach'd, receiving the Sacrament, and ſuch like. But if there muſt be no *Communion* held with *Diſſenting* Churches, no not ſo much as *Occaſional* Communion, unleſs under a ſevere *Penalty*, hereby we deſtroy that *Article* of our Creed, unleſs 'tis imagin'd, that there are no *Saints* among the *Diſſenters*, and conſequently none among the *Foreign Proteſtant Churches*, for we that are Diſſenters profeſs to own the ſame *Faith* with them; and thus the *Church* of *England* will ſtand alone by it ſelf, and ſet up for the *only Catholick Church*, and ſo a new *Infallibility* will ſpring up among us, and this to us is Matter of *Perplexity.*

Beſides, it is Matter of *Prejudice* and *Scandal*, to ſee the Church ſo *variable* in her Doctrine. Time has been, when *Occaſional Conformity* has been preſs'd by the Church on Diſſenters as a Duty. In the *London Caſes*, *p.* 493. we are call'd on after this manner, *Do as much as you can. Do*

*as*

*as much as the Dissenters, who are most eminent for Learning, Piety, Preaching, Writing, Experience and Fame, sometime, actually do. They have own'd our Communion to be lawful, they have received the Sacrament kneeling*, &c. But now it seems *Occasional* Conformity is become a *Crime*, and is made *Penal*: But if 'tis a *Crime* and is become *Penal*, because it is an *evil* Practice, then 'tis a *Crime* not only in *some*, but in *all Persons*, whether they do it for *Preferment* or no, for the Reason is one and the same in all, if it be an *Evil* that deserves to be *punished*; and thus the *Doctrine* of the *Church* (if that of the *London Cases* may be so called) is as *variable* as the Wind, and calculated only to *serve a Turn*, which is Matter of *Scandal*, seeing Christ's Doctrine is always one and the same.

7. It is Matter of Perplexity to us, *to see the Foundations of Love weakned.* There's no Duty more *inculcated* in Scripture, nor more plainly *reveal'd* in the whole Bible, than that of *Love*; That *Christians*, though of different Apprehensions and Perswasions, *should love one another.* Our Saviour has made it the Badge of our Discipleship, *John* 13. 35. *By this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* He also calls it a *new* Commandment. *John* 13. 34. *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* Yea, he calls it *his* Commandment, as claiming a special Propriety in it, *John* 15. 12. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another.* The Primitive Christians were remarkable for this. *See*, said the Heathen, (as *Tertullian* reports it) *how the Christians do love one another!* Love and Unity are very lovely in themselves. *Ps.* 133. 1. *Behold*

*how*

*how good and pleasant it is for Brethren to live together in Unity!* Thus it should be, e'en among Christians of *different* Persuasions: For the Strong should *bear with the Weak*, Rom. 15. 1. and they should not *despise or judge one another*, Rom. 14. 1, *to* 4. but *Love as Brethren*, 1 Pet. 3. 8. Now, there is great Complaint of the *want of Love* among Christians at this Day. *The love of many waxeth cold.* But instead of *mending* this Matter, will not such a Method as an *Occasional Bill* tend to *lessen* it, and set Christians at a greater *distance*, and a greater *variance* among themselves, than they were before, when they shall not be *permitted* to hold Fellowship and *Communion* one with another, as they were wont to do?

8. It is Matter of Perplexity to us, *to see a Bone of Contention thrown among Protestants*, which tends to *divide* us, and *weaken* our Hands, and to *strengthen* the Hands of the common Enemy, the *Papists*. Dissenters were in hopes to have been *incorporated* into the Church, and to have made with them *one Body*, seeing we all agree in the *Essentials* of Religion, and differ only in *Modes* and *Ceremonies*; and such Things the Church calls *Indifferent*, tho' we can't own 'em under that *Notion*. And if such a *Union* could be effected, we need not *fear* our Adversaries the Papists, the *return* of Popery, or the *Pretender*. But instead of being brought to a *closer Union*, the *Church* and *Dissenters* are now by this Method driven *farther asunder* than they were before; to the *Joy*, no doubt, of our common *Enemy*, who knows how to improve our *Divisions*.

'Tis the great *unhappiness* of this Nation, that we are so *divided* among ourselves, and that no healing

healing Methods are taken to unite us. " Sure-
" ly *theſe Diviſions* (as ſaith a Reverend Perſon of
" the Church of *England*) tend to the *weakning*
" of the Nation, and rendring it *obnoxious* to the
" Ill-Will or Ambition of any *publick Adverſary*:
" They ſtrengthen the Hands of the *Papiſts*, who
" have been always ready to *foment* them: They
" tend to the Deſtruction of publick *Charity*,
" bring a Scandal and *Reproach* upon Religion
" itſelf, and lay a *ſtumbling Block* in the way of
" thoſe that are *Atheiſtically* inclined. "

9. It is Matter of Perplexity to us, *to ſee a Foundation laid for the turning out a conſiderable Number of brave Men*, who ſtand Unconvicted of any *Crime*; Men hearty in the *Intereſt* of the preſent Government, of *Revolution* Principles, as oppoſite to the *Pretender's* Intereſt as any in the Kingdom, Suppreſſors of *Vice*, Zealous in promoting the *Reformation of Manners*, Protectors of the *Injur'd* and *Oppreſs'd* among us, impartial Diſtributors of *Juſtice* to all, an Ornament to the *Places* they fill'd up, and a Credit and Bleſſing to the *Nation* in general; (*b*) who by this Bill will be *turn'd out*, and made *uncapable* of Places of *Truſt* under the Government, becauſe they worſhip God in a *Meeting*, where the Word of God is *purely* preach'd, and the Sacraments are *duly* adminiſtred; when at the ſame time, no *Bill* is fram'd to keep out *Atheiſts*, *Deiſts*, *Socinians* and *Libertines*,

(*b*) *How* uſeful *Diſſenters have been to the* Government, *and what a* Loſs *the Government is like to ſuſtain by a Bill that* excludes *'em*, *is ſhewn at large in that excellent Book*, The Intereſt of *England*, &c. p. 18. *to* 23. *to which I refer the Reader.*

*bertines*, *prophane Swearers* and *Sabbath-breakers*, *Drunkards* and *looſe Livers*, who can *comply* with the Religion of the Times, be it what it will. If it were the Deſign (as a late *Author* has well noted) to keep all *ill Men* out of Office, and it were allowed, that the *Diſſenters* were *ill Men*, yet a Teſt (that was to keep out *ill Men* as ſuch) ought not to be contrived to keep them out *alone*, unleſs they were the *only* ill Men, or the *worſt* in the Kingdom. *Bleſſed art thou, O Land, when thy King is the Son of Nobles, and thy Princes eat in due Seaſon, for Strength and not for Drunkenneſs*, Eccleſ. 10. 17. And ſaith the ſame inſpir'd Perſon, *Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach to any People*, Prov. 14. 34.

10. Laſtly, I might alſo add, that 'tis Matter of Perplexity to us to think, *That in the proſpect of a much wiſh'd for Peace, after a long, bloody and expenſive War, wherein the Diſſenters have born their Parts with great chearfulneſs, as well as others; they muſt be excluded from the common Joy*, and be offered up a *Sacrifice* to the unreaſonable deſires of *ſuch Men*, who, on all Occaſions, ſhew more *inclination* to unite with *Rome*, or at leaſt the *moderate Papiſts of* France, as they are pleas'd to call 'em, than with their *Diſſenting Proteſtant Brethren*, who agree with the Church in all the *Eſſential* Articles of Religion.

Now what's the *drift* of all this Diſcourſe, but to call on you, *my Brethren*, to *imitate* the *Jews* in the Words of my *Text*, who were *perplex'd* when a ſevere Decree was paſs'd againſt them. The *Exhortation* therefore from the whole is this, *To be perplexed*, to be troubled in Mind, to be grieved in Spirit, and to lay to Heart the Hard-

ſhips

ſhips of your *Brethren*, though you your ſelves be not *ſo immediately* concern'd in 'em. For we ought to *bear one another's Burthens*, and to *ſympathize* with each other.

There is ſome *Reaſon* of this Advice, becauſe I muſt ſay, and I can't ſpeak it without *Grief*, That there is a Spirit of *Infatuation* gone forth into the Nation; not only among *Churchmen*, thoſe whom they call *High-Church*, who call Light Darkneſs, and Darkneſs Light; Good Evil, and Evil Good; who cry out of Danger, *where there is none*, but can ſee no Danger from *popiſh Adverſaries*, which is evident to every Body elſe: But alſo among the *Diſſenters* themſelves, who, unleſs they are directly *knock'd* in the Head, can't *foreſee* the Conſequences of Things; *Solomon* tells us, that *a prudent Man's Eyes are in his Head, who foreſeeth the Evil, and hideth himſelf*, Prov. 22. 3.

I am not exhorting you to *Mobs* and *Riots*; No, leave that to the *High-Church*, who glory in the Doctrine of *Paſſive Obedience*; but leave the *practice* thereof unto the *Diſſenters*; and I hope we ſhall practiſe it. But my End is, to *drive you to your Knees*; to make you beſiege Heaven with your Prayers, that God would *bleſs* our *rightful* and *lawful* Sovereign Lady *Queen* Anne, and eſtabliſh her Throne in *Religion* and *Righteouſneſs*, and help her to fulfil her *Royal Word*, to preſerve the Toleration *inviolable*; and that he would keep from her *Evil Counſel* and *Evil Counſellors*, and bleſs us in good Time, with a *good, honourable* and *laſting Peace*; and turn the *Counſels* of our *Achitophels* into *Fooliſhneſs*, ſuch, I mean, who aim at *themſelves*, at making themſelves

*Great*, but have not the *Cauſe* of *God*, and the *Proteſtant Religion*, and the *Good* of the *Nation* before their Eyes. And who knows, but that God in time may hear and anſwer?

Perhaps you will ſay, that the *Decree is paſt*. And what then? Was not the Decree paſs'd in *Haman*'s Time? Was it not a Decree according to the *Laws* of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, that was *unalterable*, ſo that the King himſelf could not alter the Decree? And yet *God found* a way of Eſcape.

But what was the *way* they took for it? Why, firſt, they were *perplex'd*, and laid to Heart the awful Providence; they were full of Thoughtfulneſs, full of Grief, they did not *deſpiſe* the Lord's chaſtning; then they ſet themſelves to *Prayer*, and *Humiliation*, and *Reformation*; and then God raiſed up an *Inſtrument* for their Help and Succour. And who knows, but if we are *perplex'd*, and do take this *Method*, but that God may *fruſtrate* the Deſigns of our Enemies in all this.

*Haman* thought, he had *got the Day*, when he had *engroſs'd* the King to himſelf; but the *Gallows* at laſt was his *Preferment*.

We know not what is in the *Womb* of Providence. It concerns us to mind *our Duty*, and to leave *Events* with God; to remember this, that *the Lord reigneth*, and that *tho' Clouds and Darkneſs are round about him, yet Judgment and Righteouſneſs, Mercy and Faithfulneſs, are the Habitation of his Throne*. God knows how to deliver, tho' we know not the way of it.

Let us therefore, *my Brethren*, endeavour to *engage* God on our ſide, who has the *Hearts* of Princes

Princes in his *Hand*, and can *turn* them as a River of Water. And take this for a certain Rule, it ſhall be well with the *Righteous*, however Things go. *Iſai.* 3. 10, 11. *Say to the Righteous, it ſhall be well with him; but wo to the Wicked, it ſhall be ill with him.*

And let me add, tho' *the Wicked have their Portion in this Life*, Pſal. 17. 14. yet the *Upright ſhall have Dominion in the Morning*, Pſal. 49. 14. In this World we muſt expect Trouble; *they that will live godly, ſhall ſuffer Perſecution*, as ſaith the Apoſtle, 2 *Tim.* 3. 12. Our Saviour hath told us, his *Kingdom is not of this World*, John 18. 36. and that *if any Man will come after him*, or be his Diſciple, *he muſt deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs*, Mat. 16. 24. But withal he has told us of a Crown hereafter, *Luk.* 12. 32. *Fear not, little Flock, 'tis your Father's good pleaſure to give you a Kingdom*, and let us comfort our ſelves with theſe Words.

*FINIS.*

BOOKS *printed for the ſame Author, and ſold by* J. Clark, *at the* Bible *and* Three Crowns *in* Cheapſide, *and* J. Cooke, *Bookſeller in* Sherborne.

1. PRay *for the Peace of* Jeruſalem. A Sermon preach'd at *Sherborne*, on the Publick Faſt, *March* 15. 1709-10. a little after the Rebellious Tumult occaſion'd by Dr. *Sacheverel's* Trial.

2. A Reply to Mr. *Curganvil's* Dialogues; wherein the Cauſe of *Diſſenters* is pleaded, their Separation vindicated from the Charge of *Schiſm*, and their Miniſtry proved to be a *true Miniſtry*, and conſequently their Churches to be *true Churches*.

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3. A Reply to Mr. *James Lacy's* Anſwer to a Letter and Preface; wherein the Caſe of *Ceremonies* is conſider'd; the Power of *Church Governors* is explain'd and ſtated; the Grounds of *Lay-Nonconformity* are laid open; *Ordination* by *Presbyters* is ſhewn to be valid; the Plea of *Neceſſity* for the *Foreign* Churches is conſider'd and remov'd; and the *Diſſenters* vindicated (both Miniſters and People) from the Charge of *Schiſm*; with a Perſwaſive to a *Union*.

4. A View of *Arminianiſm* compared with moderate *Calviniſm*; wherein is ſhewed the *dangerous* Tendency of the *Arminian* Doctrine, as repreſented and explained by *Limborch* in his Body of Divinity; and how it oppoſeth not only the Holy Scriptures, and the *Weſtminſter*-Aſſembly's Confeſſion of Faith, but the eſtabliſh'd Articles of the Church of *England*.